

## **Jury Duty: An American Responsibility**

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(24 hour recording)

The right to trial by jury is the privilege of every person in the United States, whether citizen or not. Both the United States and California Constitutions guarantee this cherished right.

However, it also requires that citizens give of their time to serve as jurors, and thus do their part to protect this cherished American right.

While being called to jury duty can be viewed as an inconvenience, many citizens also find it to be a learning process and a rewarding experience as well as a civic responsibility.

Here is some basic information to help when you receive a summons to jury duty.

### **Jury Trials**

Trials allow two or more parties to have their dispute settled by a court. Some lawsuits are decided by the judge alone; others are decided by jury. A jury is a body of ordinary citizens sworn to make an impartial decision based on the evidence or information presented during a trial. Jurors serve in two kinds of cases – civil and criminal. In a civil case one person or company – the plaintiff – asks the court to protect some right or to help recover money or property from another person or company – the defendant. In a criminal case the State of California – the plaintiff – charges that a person – the defendant - committed a crime and asks that the defendant be fined or sent to jail or prison.

### **Lists of Potential Jurors**

Jurors' names are selected at random from lists of registered voters and individuals who have a driver's license or identification card issued by the California Department of Motor Vehicles.

Your name will remain on the county jury list for one year. You may be called at any time, but no more than once, during that year.

### **Jury Duty versus Your Regular Job**

Your employer must let you off for jury duty. Employers cannot discharge an employee called for jury duty if the employee gives reasonable notice of the summons. However, employers do not have to pay for your attendance at jury duty.

### **Hours of Service**

Normally, jurors are asked to appear in the morning starting at 8:30 a.m. and at other hours throughout the morning. There may be a call-in for possible service in the afternoon. This can start at 1:00 p.m. or at a different hour in the afternoon. Jurors will usually be dismissed by 5:00 p.m.

When reporting for jury on the first day, roll call is taken and then hardships will be considered. This process will take about fifteen to thirty minutes.

If you become a sworn juror on a trial, courts are normally in session from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. You will get several intermittent breaks and at least an hour for lunch.

The average trial in Placer County lasts three to four days.

Telephone office hours are nine a.m. to noon and one p.m. to three p.m. Monday through Friday. Due to the high volume of calls, you may be on hold for a few minutes, but we will answer your call as soon as possible. Please be patient.

**Jury Duty Compensation**

If you are selected as a sworn juror for a trial, you are compensated at a rate of \$15.00 per day after the first day's appearance. Mileage is paid at the rate of fifteen cents per mile, one way from your home to the court ONLY. Mileage will be paid from the first day of your appearance. You will be paid by check and this usually takes up to two or three weeks.

Because of the small amount of some checks issued, the court asks that jurors waive their compensation due to the costliness of the process. However, if you do not waive your mileage fee, please be sure to cash or deposit your checks.

If you do not receive your compensation check or have any questions, please call the jury office during business hours and let us know.

**Court Security**

For public safety, all court in Placer County are greeted by bailiffs at the door and must pass through a metal detector or be scanned.

You will speed the clear of people through the security system if you leave such items as pocketknives, pepper spray or any other weapons in your vehicle.

**Recommended Attire**

The following guidelines may be used for appropriate attire. Shorts, abbreviated tops, beach or eveningwear is not acceptable.

Business attire or casual wear is generally worn.

**Postponement of Jury Duty**

Placer County jurors will be allowed a one-time postponement for hardships such as vacations, illness of self or family, out of town for business, child care problems, financial problems, work hardships, transportation problems, full time students and many other various reasons.

We can grant a one-time postponement for most hardships you may have. You will find we are very understanding and helpful.